# Seeking Security

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Pakistan has been spiralling into a dark hole of insecurity due to a frenzy of terrorism, religious extremism and radicalism, institutional disharmony, corruption and shaky governance. Every now and then it seems the situation is circling in a vortex that injects renewed anguish and agony into the very soul of our society. Our state is plagued by unstoppable waves of sectarianism, divisions, uncertainties, chaos, and horror from its length to its breadth. It seems that some of the power brokers, or those who fancy entry to the circles of power, have assumed a permanent license to decide the fate of this state. Its naive inhabitants, who usually dwell with censored intellects and hearts, at times, miles away from the grim realities, are the least bothered about national politics and their strange chimerical cycles. Their pressing concerns are, rather, to live in peace and to earn enough to feed their families with bread and butter. Indeed, they are the real victims of ongoing concerns.

There is no denying the fact that the stability and serenity of any state are inextricably linked with proficient governance, and this also applies to Pakistan. Our country faces a multitude of internal security issues. For instance, over the years the national government has mishandled the governance of Balochistan, the largest province of Pakistan. There a “National Narrative” is completely missing. These rebellious movements and the like sentiments against the state are mounting with time, and our governments have been unable to take the pragmatic steps necessary to curb such elements. There,

different communities are threatened, brutally assaulted by the suicide bombers, terrorised, and left utterly paranoid. Here dissidents feel totally alienated by the bizarre dispositions of the federal policymakers. There the people with patriotic fervour, who have made uncountable sacrifices for this land, are left unvalued and un-embraced. There the demigod Sardars still grind down the freedom of the masses and seek to control them. But enough of this *sardarism* and feudalism, the Balochi people must be given their legitimate rights to live like the rest of our citizens; instead of being alienated, they should be embraced, honoured and respected.

Moreover, the international conspirators are also trying to maximise the terror, utter collapse of law and order, sectarianism, and ethnic divisions so as to aggravate further chaos. The reasons for such heinous acts are all too obvious. To name but a few, look at sparkling Gwadar Port, at economic ties with China, India's interests, and the rich mineral prospects that made Balochistan the battlefield of conflicting interests. The people of Balochistan need attention, equality and equity in the different spheres of life so as to attain the basic amenities with health and education being priorities. Foreign funding is pouring in support of a range of nefarious goals, and government should seek to locate and dislodge such criminals and their linkages in Pakistan through proper surveillance and operations. The repatriation of Afghan refugees is also a matter of grave concern and needs to be dealt with on an urgent basis in order to mitigate the impact of narcotics smuggling, illegal businesses and to some extent terrorism. In addition, the local government system needs to be strengthened by recruiting patriotic and honest officials who could bring about a revolution through fairer power-sharing. The implementation of the 18$^{th}$ amendment in its true spirit would also help put the system on the right track. Introducing policies for land reforms and mineral exploitation would be a positive step, along with the reform and empowerment of provisional Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) that could carry on the process of de-radicalisation with renewed ways and means.

On the other side, the humongous city of Karachi has remained host to many terrorist activities over the years. These include targeted killings, kidnappings for ransom, embezzlement, plundering, suicide bombings, commercial and street robberies. Taken together, these place the city's inhabitants under a relentless reign of fear and distress. To counter this, in September 2013, the government of Pakistan launched an operation to eradicate extremism and terrorism within Karachi. Dead terrorists apart, in 2014 about 400 suspected target killers have been captured as the operation seems moving towards success. LEAs are working 24/7 to transform Karachi into a peaceful zone. But at the same time, 250 members of the police have disappeared since last September, and the LEAs have as yet been unable to trace them. To ensure peace, the appropriate institutional framework should play its part and help the LEAs to wipe out terrorists and their evil intentions, by applying non-political techniques. At the same time, the rift between the centre and provincial government is also a stumbling block in the successful operational procedures. If the provincial government is not sincere on board, this affects the competence of the police; an efficient government can also field a better and more professional police force.

Pakistan's political instability is one pivotal root cause of vulnerability. Lack of democratic values, the administration's lack of continuity and its questionable credibility, coupled with economic deprivation, poverty, social fragmentation and radicalism are pushing the country into its downward spiral. For a stable Pakistan, there is a dire need for a series of policy reforms in the sphere of National Internal Security. Reform of the police should be depoliticised and optimised to promote internal security. Civil Service reforms should be depoliticised and integrated as well, while the legislative reforms for assisting domestic policy, along with judicial reforms to ensure speedy justice must be combined to form a comprehensive, objective and goal-oriented internal security policy. On the political front, immediate reforms to guarantee transparency in governance and the parliamentary processes are required, as is the

elimination of corruption, the rule of law, an accountable and neutral media. The suggested reforms together can play instrumental roles in strengthening the state's internal security capabilities. Most importantly, educational reforms could also serve and help lead Pakistan to a robust internal security environment which will pave the way for promoting tolerance and pluralism in society. In this regard, madrassah education could also be regulated to ensure equivalence with non-madrassah education which can help to exterminate divisions in society. Also, reliable clergies must be integrated in such a manner that will assist to harmonise social sectarianism.

The upshot of all this is that the time has come for all institutions -- the government, various stakeholders, LEAs, the military, and the people to join their acts together to rid the country of the blood and chaos by ripping aside the curtains behind which our enemies are hiding and finally freeing ourselves from this quagmire of fragilities, fear and furores.